

AMAA NEWS



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Editor
Movses B. Janbazian



Mrs. Lucy Janjigian of Franklin Lakes, NJ, AMAA's short-term volunteer missionary, directed the Art & Crafts Programs of the AMAA sponsored Summer Camps in Armenia and Karabagh (See related story on pages 10-11).

About Prayer

by Dikran Youmshakian*

A little girl while praying in a school chapel recited the following words: "Lord, I beg you, please move Mount Everest to Europe. I know You can do it."

A teacher, who happened to pass by her side, later on called the girl asking her what that prayer was about.

The girl's answer was, "Why, Ms. Susan, the Bible teaches us that if we pray in faith we can move mountains. You see, this morning in our geography test, I wrote 'Europe' next to 'Everest'. I really need that answer to be correct, otherwise I may fail the test."

There is no doubt that the girl was praying in faith. Yet, unfortunately for her, the mountain did not move. Mount Everest is still in Asia.

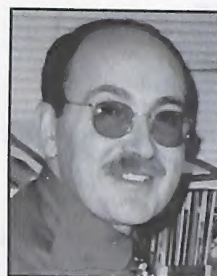
Prayer is one of the major weapons in the possession of a Christian. When in need, when left defenseless, while going through hard times, or even in joy, we can rely on the power of prayer.

"All things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer believing, you shall receive" says the Bible. What a wonderful and amazing privilege given to Christians. "Ask and you will receive!" (Matthew 21:22).

Do we really think, however, that what we are told is true? Has anyone tried it? Has any one experienced it? I am sure people have experienced the power of prayer. There are people who have asked God for something, and their wish was fulfilled. Yet, I am also sure that there had been times when we had asked God for some favor, but our prayer was not answered. Then, why does Jesus say, "Ask and you will receive"?

While walking with His disciples, Jesus came across a fig tree which did not bear fruit. Jesus said, "You will never again grow any fruit." The fig tree died.

The disciples were amazed. Jesus used the fig tree to teach a very important lesson. He introduced the power of faith to His



disciples. He said if you have faith, then whatever you ask will be done. If you have faith and you say to the fig tree "die", then it will surely die.

Jesus went further to say that if you have faith, then you can say to the mountain "move", and it will move. What equip-

ment has the capability of moving a mountain? Do we really need to move a mountain? That little girl wanted Mount Everest to be moved, because she had marked in her test that Everest was in Europe. We Armenians may want to offer such a prayer and move Mount Ararat to our side of the border.

What Jesus was trying to teach was, "All things are possible with God" (Mark 10:27). There is no limit to God's ability, and therefore, there is no limit to the power of our prayer. Prayer is the most powerful weapon imaginable.

If prayer is a weapon in the hands of Christians, then surely there should be limitations and conditions attached to its use. A soldier can carry a weapon, yet he is not free to use it as he wishes. He can use it only as instructed.

It is the same with prayer. We are given the power of prayer, but there are conditions attached to its use. These conditions should be fulfilled so that our requests may be granted.

1) **We must pray in faith.** Without faith prayer is like a weapon with no ammunition. What good is it when we have the most sophisticated weapon, yet we do not carry ammunition. Without faith, prayer accomplishes nothing.

2) **We must pray according to God's Will.** When we pray we should never request God to do something which is contradictory to His will. When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, he specifically mentioned the following words: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Jesus did not say pray using the words "my will be done." Even He Himself, who was the son of God, while on the cross prayed and said, "Thy will be done."

3) **We must pray in confidence.** When we pray we should pray with confidence. We

should have confidence in God and in ourselves. We should believe in God and in the power of prayer. We should be confident that our prayer will reach God.

4) **We must remain in Christ, and His Words must remain in us.** While we pray we should be under Christ's authority. We should be obedient to His will.

Christ is the Lord of our lives. He was the One that came and gave His life for us. He is the only one who can give faith to our prayers. We should remain in Christ. We end all of our prayers saying "In Christ's name" or "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." These should not be mere words. In order for our prayers to be acceptable to God, we should fully understand the true meaning of these words.

5) **We should not be selfish while we pray.** God will answer our prayers, and He will fulfill our requests. But when we pray for the needs of others, those will be fulfilled first. We should not pray only for ourselves, saying "I need this", or "Please God do this for me." Pray first for the needs of others. Remember that there are so many people that need our help. The minimum we can do is to pray for their needs. If each one of us prays for one person during the day, imagine the blessings to our society.

Moreover, we should also pray for our enemies. In Matthew 5:44 Jesus told His disciples, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." It is very difficult for us to accept this truth, but this is true Christianity. If you can not accept this truth, then don't expect answers to your prayers.

6) **We should not be like the hypocrite when we pray.** "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men....But enter into the closet and pray in secret. And the father will reward you openly" (Matthew 6:5,6).

There is no regulation against praying in public. But what Jesus asks is that our prayers should not be for self promotion. Praying is not show business. It is a holy communication between us and God.

Rededication of Haigazian University

In 1953 Haigazian University - then a college - was founded through the efforts of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE). Its purpose was - and remains - to give all qualified Armenian students in the Middle East an opportunity to acquire a college education, irrespective of their financial circumstances. Opportunities for higher education in the Middle East were, and are, limited and expensive, so Haigazian University from its inception quickly became an important educational asset to the Armenian communities in the Middle East. Its student body was largely, but not exclusively, of Armenian origin.

The protracted civil war in Lebanon, which began in the 1970's and dragged on for more than a decade, was a disaster for most of Lebanon's people and almost all of its institutions. Haigazian also was a casualty of that war. For security reasons, it had to vacate its campus in West Beirut and move to more limited quarters in East Beirut. Despite dwindling enrollment and other problems associated with the civil war, Haigazian continued to function, though on a limited scale.

Once peace was restored to Lebanon and life in Beirut resumed a more normal rhythm, Haigazian University faced an-

other problem - - rising enrollment. Haigazian's quarters in East Beirut were limited and its previous campus in West Beirut was severely damaged. A decision had to be made: Should Haigazian be maintained as a small and limited educational institution, or should an effort be made to restore it to its former size and importance?

A high-level meeting took place in Lebanon last year, wherein the AMAA, which had helped support Haigazian since its inception, and the University's governing board confronted this question. After a thorough review and discussion of the situation, the members decided to repair the carnage suffered by the University's West Beirut campus, and move Haigazian back to its former location. A one-million-dollar program to remodel and rebuild the campus has produced one of the most attractive urban landmarks in Beirut. The University houses four faculties: Business and Economics, Sciences, Education and Behavioral Sciences and Humanities. Currently, there are about 400 students enrolled; about 70% of whom are Armenian. In addition to its B.A./B.S. programs, Haigazian has two programs at the M.A. level: Clinical Psychology and School Administration. There is also a center for Armenian Studies; the only one

of its kind in the Middle East, which offers University-level degrees and publishes an annual Armenological Review.

The completion of this project was marked by a rededication ceremony at the University on November 9, 1997, under the auspices of the Lebanese Minister of Higher Education, H. E. Mr. Fawzi Habeish. In attendance were Armenia's Ambassador to Lebanon, several members of Lebanon's Evangelical, Apostolic and Catholic churches. The event showed not only the AMAA's confidence in the future of the Armenian communities in the Middle East, but, in the words of the AMAA's Executive Director, Rev. Movses B. Janbazian, it "highlights a number of key elements in our witness and service in [Lebanon]. It demonstrates our genuine prayerful desire for a real reconciliation among the former warring factions in Lebanon; it shows our commitment and practical contribution to rebuilding war-ravaged Lebanon; and it expresses our faith in the final victory of trust over suspicions; love over hatred, friendship over enmity and peace over war. And finally, the return of Haigazian University to its old home is an affirmation of our belief in the mission of the Land of the Cedars to serve as a place where people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds can live together in harmony, joy, prosperity and peace". □

The above conditions make it evident that prayer is not the reciting of mere words. Nor it is a magical formula. Prayer should be in the right way, in faith, so that it releases the infinite power of the Living God. Too often we pray disregarding the conditions set. We ask for things God has forbidden. We ask God to bless us while we intend to do things not in accordance to His will. We can not ask God to bless us while we intend to practice worldly habits.

If we wish to see our prayers answered, we should be willing to let God have His way. If we keep up with God's will, our prayers will be definitely answered.

However we have to remember that God is the one who will answer our prayers, and He knows the best time to fulfill our request. We may not experience His answer immediately. God may wait for a while. He knows our needs, and He knows when we are ready. In the meantime we should continue to pray. In 1 Kings 18 we read about Elijah praying for rain. Elijah prayed seven times before rain came.

If the answer to our prayers are delayed, we should check again, to see if we were fulfilling what God expects from us. We can not expect God to answer our prayers, if we are doing something wrong. We should

re-examine ourselves before we pray again. The answer may come, and it may not be what we expected. God knows what is best for us.

A church was planning for a picnic. The pastor prayed for a sunny day. The day of the picnic it rained non-stop for 24 hours. The picnic was postponed. Next Sunday the preacher tried to explain that it was God's will. After church, a farmer approached and shook the preacher's hand and confessed. He said, "my crops desperately needed rain. And for days I was praying for rain". His prayer was answered. We may pray for the sun to shine, but God may pour down rain. God knows what is best for us. □

* Mr. Dikran Youmshakian is the Office Manager of the Armenian Missionary Association of America.

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AMAA's 78th Annual Meeting in New York

Like any living organism, the church, the Body of Christ, was intended to grow. This was the theme and the undercurrent for the Armenian Missionary Association of America's 78th Annual Meeting and related activities held on October 16-19, 1997, at the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York (AECNY).

Before the Annual Meeting itself took place, the AMAA held a two-day seminar for pastors and lay church leaders, entitled "Church Growth: Challenges and Opportunities". Speakers and participants included leaders from the Armenian Evangelical Unions of North America, France and Armenia, as well as South America. The forty or more participants worshipped, prayed and discussed together the biblical understanding and current theories of growth, as well as the current situation in their respective churches. They also enjoyed an extended time of fellowship as colleagues in ministry and Christian brethren.

The Association's Board of Directors' meeting was held on Friday, October 17, at the fellowship hall of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York. AMAA's outgoing President, Albert Momjian, Esq., called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Moderator of the AECNY, Dr. H. Philip Hovnanian, also chairman of the 78th Annual Meeting Committee, welcomed the AMAA Board members and guests. After recalling that the AECNY was the first home of the AMAA, he offered the opening prayer.

Reports were heard from committee chairs, Board officers and AMAA staff. Highlights of reports include those of AMAA Executive Director Rev. Movses B. Janbazian's most recent field trip to Armenia and of AMAA Representative in Armenia Rev. Rene Leonian.

Rev. Janbazian reported that on his trip to Armenia he represented the AMAA at the Annual Meeting of "Hayastan" All-Armenia Fund (HAAF). He also took part in a number of church and AMAA-related activities scheduled to coincide with his visit. Included in these activities were the ordination of three new local pastors, and a ground-breaking worship service for the

new sanctuary of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Stepanavan.

After greeting the Board Members on behalf of the Armenian Evangelical churches and AMAA staff in Armenia, Rev. Leonian spoke extensively about the work

of the AMAA in Armenia. He reported that two new Christian workers were added to the AMAA staff this past year: Mr. Harout Nercessian and his family arrived from Montreal, Canada; and Ms. Arpy Kardashian, a recent graduate of Haigazian University, arrived from Beirut, Lebanon. They will provide much-needed assistance to the work of the Association. He spoke of three major areas of service provided in Armenia and Karabagh: Child Sponsorship, Children's Milk Fund and Medical Services. The AMAA has over 1600 orphans and children of impoverished families who receive bi-monthly packages of food, clothing and other necessary supplies for survival. The milk program, the project of the AMAA-sponsored Armenian Children's Milk Fund, provides substitute milk formula for infants born with nutritional deficiencies. This past year, approximately 6,000 cases or 36,800 pounds were airlifted to Armenia in four shipments. AMAA provides free medical services at its Mobile Clinic in Yerevan to over 6,000 patients annually. AMAA's new, two-story medical building, located at AMAA Center, is expected to be in operation by December 1997.

Rev. Leonian also commented that there is a good working relationship with leaders of both the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Mountainous Karabagh, as well as with the Holy See of Etchmiadzin. The AMAA, in addition to its usual activities, cooperates with various state and church officials in various joint projects



Revs. Movses B. Janbazian and L. Nishan Bakkalian celebrating the Lord's Supper.

such as the distribution of Bibles to public school students, financing the building of public schools, and summer camps for orphaned and underprivileged children.

The Annual Meeting, open to all AMAA members, Armenian Evangelical church representatives and friends from related organizations, was held on Saturday morning, October 18, in the sanctuary of the 101-year-old host church. Some eighty delegates from all over the world, in the course of several hours, witnessed a comprehensive presentation of the varied efforts, accomplishments and challenges the Association is meeting in twenty countries. In particular, the work in Armenia and Karabagh received prominent attention through the report of Rev. René Léonian, AMAA Representative in Armenia. Both in the Friday evening Board of Directors' meeting and in the Annual Meeting, through question-and-answer periods, Rev. Léonian presented a clear and hopeful picture of the present situation and a prognosis for the future.

Reports were also presented by the Chairs/Treasurers of AEUNA-affiliated church Missions committees, AMAA Chapters, Committee chairs, and officers, including President, Albert Momjian, Esq.; Treasurer, Andy Torigian; and Executive Director, Rev. Movses B. Janbazian. Their reports showed that the Association had a robust and successful year. Its resources grew, as did the demands on those resources. New ministries were begun and existing ones were expanded. Among the

significant initiatives mentioned were the following: the return of Haigazian University from east Beirut to its original location in West Beirut; the opening of an Armenian Evangelical Seminary in Yerevan; and the impending relocation of AMAA headquarters to a new facility in Paramus, NJ, not too far from its present location.

Mr. Momjian spoke gratefully for the many years he has been actively involved with the AMAA and for the past four years as the Association's President. He thanked the Board of Directors for entrusting him with the honor and privilege of being the Association's President.

Mr. Torigian, in giving his Treasurer's report, announced that the Association had a great year, with its assets growing to well over \$78.3 million (current market value), and annual expenditure of \$4.3 million. He attributed the positive outcome for the year to the Association's effective administration and prudent investing in a strong financial market.

The election results for the Board of Directors were announced by Dr. George Bezirgianian, Chairman of the Nominating Committee. Elected to the Class of 2000 were: Dr. John Daniel Abdulian of Glendale, CA; Dr. Hrair Steven Aharonian of Mission Hills, CA; Mr. Armand Avakian of Ridgewood, NJ; Dr. Nazareth Darakjian of Pasadena, CA; Mrs. Elaine Garoyan Kasparian of Belmont, MA; Mrs. Hilda Melconian of Princeton, NJ; Rev. Stephen D. Muncherian of San Bruno, CA; George R. Phillips, Esq. of Los Angeles, CA and Dr. Joseph P. Zeronian of Pasadena, CA.



AMAA's 78th Annual Meeting Sacred Music Concert featuring the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York Choir under the direction of Paul Stephan. AMAA Board of Directors meeting (left to right) Harry Dulgarian, Co-Recording Secretary; Albert Momjian, Esq., President; Rev. Movses B. Janbazian, Executive Director; Hagop Manjelijian, Field Director; and Rev. René Léonian, AMAA Representative in Armenia. AECNY members of the 78th Annual Meeting Committee.

The highlight of the weekend's activities was a sacred music concert on Saturday evening, celebrating 79 years of God-inspired ministry to the Armenian people, as well as observing Armenian Cultural Month, as is done each October. It was an exceptionally inspiring event, in which the choir of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York offered songs of praise in English and Armenian. The expert presentation of this eleven-member group was the result of their individual talents and the experienced direction of choirmaster and accompanist Paul Stephan. Well over two hundred and fifty persons attended this performance, which was enhanced by the reading of four poems on the occasion of the "Tarkmanchatz Don" (Feast of the Translators) by members of the New York church.

Sunday morning worship service was the Annual Meeting's concluding activity. Rev. Joel Mikaelian, President of the Armenian Evangelical Union of France, preached in Armenian on the topic "He must increase, but I must decrease," while Rev. Dr. Peter B. Doghramji preached in English on "The Measure of Missionary Maturity." Many other pastors participated in the service, in which the host minister, Rev. Nishan Bakalian, served as liturgist and co-celebrant, with Rev. Movses B. Janbazian, in the offering of Holy Communion.

The Annual Meeting provided occasion for having a wonderful weekend of celebration, fellowship and rejuvenation for the growth God desires for his universal church. In particular, the small but enthusiastic congregation of the host church is to be commended for its hard work and warm hospitality. □

The Executive Director's Recent Visit to Armenia

Rev. Movses B. Janbazian, Executive Director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), traveled to Armenia in mid-September 1997 to take part in the annual meeting of the "Hayasdan" All-Armenia Fund. The directors of this Fund include not only the top government officials of the Republic of Armenia, but also representatives of all the major Armenian religious, humanitarian and political organizations. The meetings took place on September 19 and 20 in Yerevan at the Presidential Palace and at the Palace of Receptions.

The purpose of the "Hayasdan" Fund is to identify and finance important development projects and, at the same time, strengthen the solidarity between homeland and diaspora Armenians. The "Hayasdan" Fund meetings were interspread with other activities, including briefings by government ministers, a visit to the Goris-Stepanakert Highway (one of the Fund's projects) linking Armenia and Karabagh.

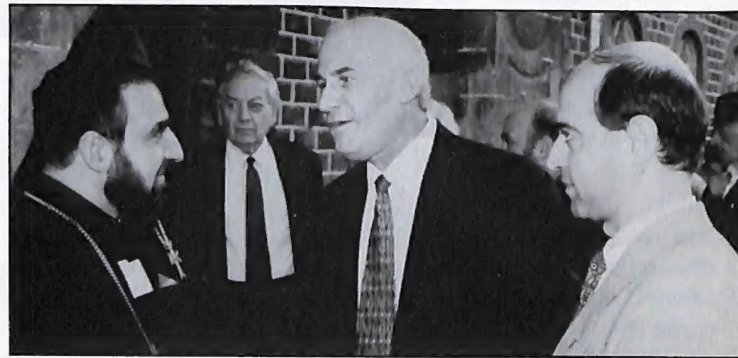
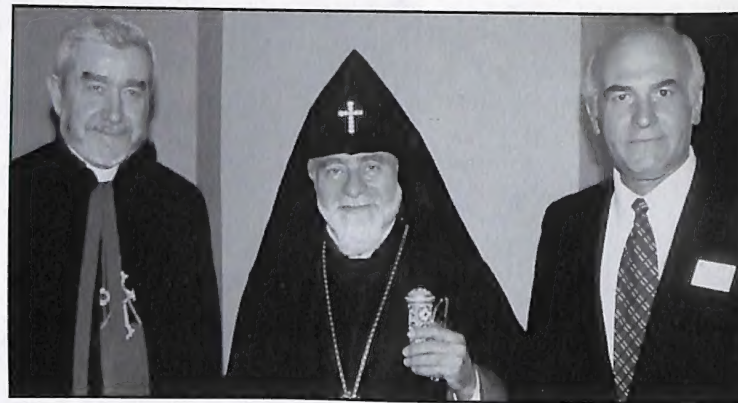
Another highlight of Rev. Janbazian's trip was the dedication of Holy Etchmiadzin's Kevorkian Seminary. This building had been confiscated by the Communist govern-

ment and for 70 years used for secular purposes. After Armenia's independence, the building was returned to Etchmiadzin. After extensive renovation, financed by Mr. & Mrs. Kevork Hovnanian of the United States, the building is now serving its original purpose – the training of priests and church workers.

The dedication ceremony was led by His Holiness Karekin I, who stressed the importance of the Seminary, whose current enrollment is about 160 students.

Rev. Janbazian also participated in the ordination ceremonies of three Evangelical pastors, Revs. Davit Torosian, Krikor Chachoyan and Gagik Tahvertian. All three had completed a four-year theological education program and are serving as pastors in local churches. This brings to seven the number of ordained Evangelical pastors serving congregations in Armenia.

Another ceremony attended by Rev. Janbazian was a ground-breaking ceremony and worship service at the site in Stepanavan, next to the local AMAA Center, where an Armenian Evangelical Church will be built. The excavation work for the basement has been completed, and soon a 280-seat



Representatives of the Armenian Catholic, Apostolic and Evangelical Churches who participated in the September, 1997 meeting of "Hayasdan" All Armenia Fund: His Beatitude Hovhannes Bedros XVIII, His Holiness Karekin I and Rev. Movses B. Janbazian. Revs. Movses B. Janbazian and Paul Haidostian congratulating Fr. Haigazoun Nujarian, Dean of the Etchmiadzin Seminary. Members of the World Council of Churches with representatives of the Apostolic and Evangelical Churches of Armenia. Inauguration of the Physica/Mathematical School of Yerevan, renovated through a generous donation by Mr. and Mrs. John Bogosian of Brussels, Belgium.

sanctuary will rise above it. A time-capsule, "containing an appropriately inscribed Bible, was placed at the spot where the future pulpit will stand.

Rev. Janbazian met with AMAA representatives and Evangelical Church leaders in Gumri, Vanatzor, Stepanavan and Yerevan. A major concern of local leaders was the shortage of space to accommodate their growing congregations. He also met with Evangelical Church leaders from southern Russia – where there are about 800,000 Armenians, centered in Sochi, Stavropol, Krasnodar and Volgograd – to discuss their problems and needs.

Other activities that took up Rev. Janbazian's time in Armenia included the following:

- He met with government officials to discuss the possibilities of expanding AMAA's relief and educational projects;

- He attended the inauguration of a diamond cutting factory established by Mr. Haik Aslanian, a prominent Armenian Evangelical from Belgium. The factory now employs 170 workers but has the capacity to double that number.

- He met with Prof. Yuri Sarkissian of the State Engineering University of Armenia (SEUA) to discuss AMAA's support of SEUA programs.

- He attended a conference of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Armenia Round Table. These conferences were set up several years ago as a conduit through which member

churches and agencies of the WCC could channel their support of the Apostolic and Evangelical churches in Armenia.

- He reviewed the progress of the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Armenia. The Seminary has 17 students who meet for classes at the AMAA Center in Yerevan.

On his way to Armenia, Rev. Janbazian stopped off in Holland to meet with representatives of the Dorcas Aid International (DAI), one of the AMAA's mission partners in Europe. DAI is a Christian organization active in many countries. They have participated in the AMAA's "Bibles for Armenia" project and pledged to continue their help in supporting AMAA programs.

On his way back from Armenia, Rev. Janbazian stopped off in Paris to meet with local Armenian Evangelical Church leaders and with officials of France's "Hope for Armenia" program, which works closely with the AMAA in relief efforts for Armenia.

Rev. Janbazian's conclusions regarding this, his most recent trip to Armenia, include the following comments:

"The AMAA is rendering a vital service to our people in the Homeland. (But) the needs in Armenia are still multitudinous, and the AMAA, in addition to its humanitarian and spiritual programs, has to initiate projects that aim at helping people to become self-reliant." □

Ground-breaking ceremony and worship service at the site of the new Armenian Evangelical Church sanctuary in Stepanavan. Ordination service of Rev. David Torosian. Ordination service of Revs. Gagik Tahvertian (left) and Krikor Chachoyan. Revs. Leonian, Janbazian and Avanesian with leaders of Evangelical Churches in southern Russia.



AMAA Elects Officers for 1997-98

The Board of Directors of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) at their most recent meeting, on Saturday, November 8, 1997, unanimously elected Mr. Andy Torigian of Paramus, NJ as the AMAA President for fiscal 1997-98.

Mr. Torigian, who most recently served as the Association's Treasurer, is a long time member and an ardent supporter of the AMAA. He, for many years, has served the Association in various capacities such as a Board member, Chairman and member of several important committees.

President of Rical Associates, an engineering sales firm, Mr. Torigian is also very active in his community. He is a member of the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ, where he has served as Trustee, Elder, Chairman of various committees and Treasurer. A veteran of the US Navy Air Corps, Mr. Torigian is the Commander of the American Legion Post 207, past master of Sylvan Doric Masonic Lodge and Commander of the Knights of Vartan. He is also associated with various civic groups and private organizations, including the Armenian Assembly, Paramus Planning Board, and Armenian-American Medical Philanthropic Fund.

Other elected officers of the AMAA were George Phillips, Esq. of Los Angeles, CA, Vice President; Mr. Vahram Aynilian of Alpine, NJ, Treasurer; Mrs. Arouss Darpinian of New Milford and Dr. Joseph Zeronian of Pasadena, Co-Recording Secretaries. Re-elected to their offices were Mr. Robert Hekemian of Teneffly, NJ, Vice President; Mr. Aram R. Minnetian of Westwood, NJ, Assistant Treasurer; Mr. Harry Dulgarian, of Belmont, MA, Co-Recording Secretary.

Each year the AMAA carries out an election to replace the one-third of its 24 elected Board members whose three-year terms have expired. On Saturday, October 18, 1997, the election results for the AMAA Board of Directors' Class of 2000 was announced during AMAA's 78th Annual Meeting held at the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York. The AMAA Nominating Committee, chaired by Dr.

George Bezirgianian, presided over this year's election process. The Committee prepares a slate of 16 candidates to be voted upon by AMAA's constituency. Eight members were elected from that slate and a ninth member was appointed by the Board. The following nine members, also referred to as the "Class of 2000", have begun to serve their three-year terms: Dr. John Daniel Abdulian, Glendale, CA; Dr. Hrair Steven Aharonian, of Mission Hills, CA; Mr. Armand Avakian, of Ridgewood, NJ; Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, of Pasadena, CA. Mrs. Elaine Garoyan-Kasparian, of Belmont, MA. Mrs. Hilda Melconian, of Princeton, NJ. Rev. Stephen D. Muncherian, of San Bruno, CA; George R. Phillips, Esq., of Los Angeles, CA. Dr. Joseph P. Zeronian, of Pasadena, CA.

The remaining Board members are: Mrs. Marie Alberian, Mrs. Arouss Darpinian, Mr. Robert Hekemian, Mr. Samuel Hekemian, Dr. H. Philip Hovnanian, Peter Kougasian, Esq., Mr. Louis Kurkjian, Dr. Ara Manougian, Mr. Aram Minnetian, Albert Momjian, Esq., Mr. Hrair Mouradian, Mr. George Philibosian, Mrs. Michelle Simourian, Mrs. Rosette Tootikian, Rev. Ron Tovmassian, Mrs. Juliette Vartanian and Dr. Victoria Voskian.

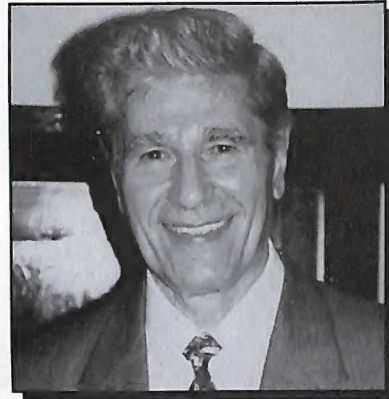
In addition to its elected members, the AMAA Board of Directors also includes the following International Advisory, as well as honorary and ex-officio members: Mr. Haik Arslanian, Mr. Apraham Dedeyan, Dr. Hovig Demirjian, Mr. Nishan Helvadjan, Mr. Hampartsum Moumdjian, Rev. G.H. Chopourian, Rev. Hovhannes N. Karjian, Rev. Joel Mikaelian, Rev. Bernard Guekguezian, Dr. George Bezirgianian, Mr. Archie Cherkezian, Mr. Edward Janjigian, Dr. Edward M. Kavjian, Rev. Karl Avakian, Dr. Rendel Levonian, Mrs. Joyce Stein and Rev. Mher Khatchikian.

Mr. Andrew Torigian, AMAA President

Mr. Robert Hekemian, AMAA Vice-President

Mr. George Phillips, Esq., AMAA Vice-President

Mr. Vahram Aynilian, AMAA Treasurer



Arslanian Family is Upbeat on the Future of Armenia's Economy

Edward K. Boghosian

Despite the impressive success of his family's jewelry business based in Antwerp, Belgium, Haig Arslanian is an unassuming, low-keyed individual who has emerged as one of the first Diaspora Armenians to invest heavily in Armenia's economy.

In 1992, when the homeland was still enveloped in darkness and experiencing other hardships, he did not hesitate to invest millions in the "Shoghagh" State diamond-polishing firm and, last month, he opened his family's own diamond-polishing operation under the name "Lori" in a village not too far from Armenia's capitol. The initial investment in the firm is said to have been in excess of \$2 million.

This September, Mr. and Mrs. Arslanian were in Armenia, along with 10-12 other Armenian jewelers from around the world, to see how they could expand their help to Armenia by setting up new businesses in the country. As jewelers and diamond dealers, naturally their interest centered on business ventures in their area of expertise.

The Arslanian couple also attended the formal opening of their new diamond-polishing facility located near the village of Nor Hadjin. The plant and the modern equipment imported from Europe will certainly make a visitor proud of seeing a sincere Armenian patriot contributing to the economic growth of the Republic of Armenia, thereby setting an example to other Diaspora Armenians.

The original plant, run by the State with the Arslanian family supporting it financially, was housed in an aging facility and called for an investment of some \$5 million from the Arslanian family in 1992. With the expansion of business, it became necessary to build a new and modern plant.

The Arslanian's three sons and daughter all work for the family firms in Antwerp, "Arslanian Freres" and "Arslanian Cutting Works." The Antwerp firm was established

in 1951 by the late Melanton Arslanian, originally from Aleppo, Syria, and the elder brother of Mr. Haig Arslanian. Melanton Arslanian passed away in 1988, leaving his son Ara and younger brother Haig to run the operation as a family business, a tradition that continues to this day. Ara Arslanian subsequently moved to New York City and presently operates a major diamond firm under the name of Cora Diamonds as part of the family business.

The Antwerp, Belgium, firm has expanded throughout the world and now is considered one of the major international



The Arslanians with Revs. Janbazian and Leonian pictured with the employees of Lori Facility in Armenia.

diamond firms. It has branches in twelve countries.

Dedication of Facility

Since both Rev. Moses B. Janbazian, Executive Director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), and Rev. Rene Leonian, Armenia Representative of the (AMAA), were in Armenia at the time, they helped dedicate the facility, named "Lori," after one of the country's regions. The firm presently employs some 160 workers, although that number could potentially increase to 300. Quality control at the plant is maintained through a sophisticated computerized system.

Employees at the facility are treated in an exemplary manner. Their salary averages

\$150 monthly, which is much higher than the average salary in the country. They also receive other benefits, such as free meals during working hours and medical care for themselves and their families.

The plant, according to Mr. Arslanian, called for an investment of \$2 million from the family and does an annual turnover of some \$50 million. Raw diamonds are imported from Russia or from Belgium, are polished and then exported to Antwerp, from where they are distributed throughout Europe. Mr. Arslanian speaks highly of the skills of the Armenian craftsmen and is confident that Armenia will soon become a major diamond-polishing center.

The building also offers a unique protection against earthquakes. The roof is recessed to serve as a basin full of water. In the event of an earthquake, the movement of the earth will also move the water in the basin and thus act as a balancing factor.

Profit Element

Mr. Arslanian believes that whoever wishes to invest in Armenia must see his investment as productive and profitable so that others may follow his example. He says the quality of diamonds polished in Armenia is on a par with the quality of diamonds sold by major international firms, among them the noted De Beers diamond firm of South Africa.

Mr. Arslanian does not wish to stop here. He is already trying to get together a number of

Diaspora jewelers to raise some \$2 million to begin a gold jewelry business. He confides that he is familiar with the work of goldsmithing in Armenia. He strongly feels that, with the introduction of modern equipment, Armenia can also excel in that trade, which will certainly create more employment for the people. "The time for handouts to the people of Armenia is temporary," asserts Mr. Arslanian. "What the people in Armenia presently need are business opportunities to prove that they are hardworking and ingenious people."

Through Mr. Arslanian's efforts, the Armenian Jewelers Forum was held in Yerevan in mid-September with 13 jewelers from all parts of the world participating. □

AMAA Summer Camp Ministries

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) has long been associated with the sponsoring of children and youth camps as part of its mission and service ministries. For decades the Association has supported summer camp programs in the Middle East, France and USA, and now in Armenia, as well as in Karabagh, Georgia and Bulgaria. The following is a brief report on the various AMAA-supported summer camps for Armenian children that took place throughout the world:

ARMENIA

Aghveran - The AMAA-sponsored Armenia Summer Camp 1997 was held from mid-June to mid-August. Since its inception, this has been the longest and most heavily attended program. Nine weeks of programs were held with more than 1,700 participants. The camps were organized with the cooperation of the Evangelical Churches of Armenia under the direction of Rev. René Leonian, AMAA Representative in Armenia, and the direct supervision of Mr. Harout Nercessian, AMAA Deputy Representative, and other AMAA regional representatives.

The summer program began with a five-day Christian Workers' Conference for 150 participants. Mr. Varouj Mazmanian of Hoboken, NJ, was the speaker of this conference. His animated and personable appearance was very effective in communicating his message.

Rev. Gilbert Leonian, pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Issy-Les-Moulineaux, Paris and Ms. Sona Pambookian of Aleppo, Syria, led the five-day conference for the 100 camp leaders. They trained, prepared and motivated the participants as counselors, teachers and workers for the children's and youth camp. This training played a major role in ensuring the effectiveness of the camps.

Over 1,000 campers participated in the four seven-day sessions held consecutively over a four-week period. An average of 250

children, ages 8 - 12, enjoyed each week's program which was filled with various learning and recreational activities. Children from all parts of Armenia had the opportunity to learn about their Christian faith, partake in nutritional meals, rest and recreate in the fresh mountainous climate, fellowship with each other and make new



Children at camp in Aghveran enjoying a well-balanced nutritious lunch. Children happily singing at Spitak Day Camp.

friends.

Special attention is given to the diet of these children. A state-certified cook supervises the menu and meal preparation to meet and exceed local governmental standards. Three meals were served daily with at least two of the meals containing meat. Sufficient quantities were prepared, assuring that each child would have plenty to eat, even second or third helpings.

450- plus youth, ages 13 - 16, attended the five-day sessions, averaging 150 campers per week. The speaker for the three weeks was Rev. Roupig Pahlevanian of the

Armenian Evangelical Baptist Church of Gumri and the conference leader was Mr. Sam Albarian of Montreal, Canada. The youth participated in a variety of activities and programs, including Christian education, music, folk dance, drama and games. Each youth was given a camp T-shirt and a pair of gym shorts the first day of the camp.

During the children's and youth camps, more than 30 workers from abroad participated in leading various aspects of the camp program. Their responsibilities included teaching Bible classes; leading songs; organizing activities; arts and crafts; and functioning as camp counselors. They were college students, retired ministers and professionals who gave their vacation time to serve God and their fellow men.

Spitak - The AMAA and L'Espoir pour L'Armenie (Hope for Armenia), with the cooperation of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Vanatzor, sponsored a day camp in Spitak. Held at the Spitak School #2 from July 10-31, 1997, each week over 100 children, ages 7-13, participated in activities and programs under the direction of Mr. Boros Haladjian of Lyon, France, and thirteen other workers from the various Evangelical churches of France. In conjunction with the camp, Gilles and Rosette Sage provided French language classes for youth and adults while Dr. Serge Tchamazian, a medical doctor, assisted by his wife, Christelle, treated over 350 pa-

tients.

Stepanavan - The AMAA and Espoir pour l'Armenie jointly sponsored, with the cooperation of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Stepanavan, day camps in Stepanavan. From July 31-August 21, 1997, each week over 100 children, ages 7-13, were bussed in from the outlying villages of Stepanavan. Under the direction of Mr. Boros Haladjian and a team of 20 workers, the children were provided with physical and spiritual nutrition.

GEORGIA

This first-ever AMAA summer camp in Georgia was held at the Pasanaury Hotel in Azgave, about 100 km from Tbilisi, Georgia. With the cooperation of the Armenian Evangelical Union of Georgia, Mr. Araig Ochianian, AMAA representative in Stepanavan, Armenia, and a team of workers from Armenia and Georgia, organized two nine-day camp sessions from August 4-20, 1997, for children ages 8 - 12.

The programs were similar to those of Armenia and Karabagh except that the sessions were held in Armenian and Russian because most of the 200 children who attended did not understand Armenian.

Rev. Vigen Galustian of San Jose, CA, was the guest Bible teacher. He had prepared a Christian-education program, that included teaching and telling Bible stories to children.

The camps were very effective in communicating the love of God to the children, some of whom heard about Jesus for the first time. One child said to her teacher, "Sister Naira, God really loves me, doesn't He?" "How can you tell?" replied Naira. The child responded, "I can see all that the leaders are doing for us, isn't that God's love?"

KARABAGH

For the second time in as many years, the AMAA has sponsored a camp at Camp Gargar in Stepanagerd, Karabagh. This year, the camp was expanded to cover a four-week, nine-day session for over 750 children, ages 7 - 12, from July 21st to August 26, 1997.

The camp was administered by Rev. René Leonian, under the direct supervision of Mr. Samuel Guiragosian, AMAA Regional Representative in Vanatzor, Armenia.

Each morning at 8:00 a.m. the children were picked up by school buses at a pre-arranged site and brought to camp. After the routine morning exercises, they were served breakfast, which was the first of three nutritious meals served daily under the careful supervision of a state-certified cook. The daily meals included such

nutritious products as meat, dairy items, fresh fruits and vegetables, grains and sweets. According to the Camp Director, Mr. Guiragosian, "due to the conflict with Azerbaijan, most of these children were, for years, deprived of such nutritious and tasty meals."

The day's activities, after breakfast, were followed by worship and Bible lessons, led by Mrs. Susan Haroutiounian and Mr. Samuel Hovagemian, both of Yerevan; and



Children happily participating in traditional folk dancing with Baroness Caroline Cox at Camp Gargar, Karabagh. Young adults group from Syria pictured at Camp Kessab with Rev. Mgo Melkonian of Los Angeles.

arts and crafts by Mrs. Lucy Janjigian of Franklin Lakes, NJ. Mrs. Janjigian spent two months in Armenia and Karabagh working with the children's camps. After lunch the children participated in sports and recreational activities which were organized by Ms. Ankiné Ouzounian of Aleppo, Syria. Dinner was the last activity of the day. Children went home with a full stomach, physically and spiritually content for the day and eager to return the following morning.

LEBANON

Summer camp programs in the Middle East are under the auspices of the Christian Endeavor Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Syria and Lebanon (CE-UAECNE) and sponsored by the AMAA. Each year both Syria and Lebanon provide camp ministries under the supervision of their respective local executive committees. The following is a brief highlight from the various camps provided during the summer

of 1997:

Three camps were held for the churches in Lebanon.

Children's Camp, ages 8-12, was held on the campus of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Ainjar, Lebanon. A total of 52 children spent the week of August 17-24 relaxing in the mountainous setting. The guest speaker was Miss Sylvie Avakian, a NEST student from Aleppo, Syria. The camp leader was Miss Ani Baboghlian of Beirut.

Junior's Camp, ages 13-18, was held in Kessab, Syria. During the week of August 11-18, 55 teens spent seven days relaxing and recreating in a country setting. The speaker for the week was Rev. Hagop Sarkissian, pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Lebanon.

Youth Camp, ages 18-30, was also held in Ainjar. The 38 participating young adults had the opportunity to hear Rev. Mgo Melkonian of Los Angeles, CA, speak on the topic "Where is Your Energy". The camp leader for the week was Mr. Sebouh Terzian, social service worker at the Trad Armenian Evangelical Social Cen-

ter, Beirut.

SYRIA

Camps in Syria were held at the Armenian Evangelical Conference Center/Camp Kchag. The Director of the camp was Miss Marie Aroyan. There were a total of seven camps held from June 21 through August 31, 1997. These included camps and retreats for children, ages 8-12; juniors, ages 12-18; youth, ages 18-30; couples,

ages 25-40; women, ages 30-60; and Sunday School leaders. A total of 363 campers and 42 leaders participated, of whom 273 were children and youth.

Featured speakers included many of the local church pastors, lay leaders and guest ministers including Revs. Harout Selimian, Serop Megerdichian, Avedis Boynerian, Beshara Moussa Oghli; Misses Silvie Avakian, Salpi Badakian, Tamar Vassoyan; Mr. Hrair Cholakian; Dr. Yervant Karakash; Rev. & Mrs. Nerses and Sevan Balabanian of Ainjar Lebanon; and Rev. Mgrdich Melconian of Los Angeles, CA.

BULGARIA

Under the auspices of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Bulgaria, a summer camp was organized and simultaneously held for children and youth from August 4-16, 1997, at the Village of Bania. A total of 53 campers participated in the two-week program. This is the second year such a camp has been sponsored in Bulgaria by the AMAA. The director of the camp was Mrs. Josephina Kechichian of Varna. She was assisted by S. Hovhanissian of Sofia; A. Kazajian and Edmon Keoshgerian of Varna; and M. Kouyoumjian and A. Tateosian of Plovdiv.

FRANCE

This year the AEUF once again offered camps at their respective camp sites - La Fontanelle and La Source, as well as at Vercor.

La Fontanelle - There were two children's camp sessions, conducted for ages 7 to 14, at which a total of 170 children participated. Director of the first session, July 4-24, 1997, was Rev. Joel Mikaelian, with Rev. Gilbert Leonian as guest speaker and Alain Bedikian served as Director of the second session, August 1-14, with Mr. Sarkis Paschaian acting as guest speaker. Family camp was held from August 16-31, with 50 participants. Pierre Kouyoumdjian served as Director and Anne-Marie Sirakorjian, as guest speaker. The children and their families enjoyed two weeks of fellowship in a beautiful mountain setting. Over 60 young adults, ages 17-30

retreated for six days from July 25 - 31, with guest speaker, Mr. Paul Milan and camp director Emmanuel Leonian.

La Source - Two three-week sessions were conducted, the first from July 4 - July 25 with 100 children participating, ages 7 to 14. The Co-Directors for this session were Christine Haladjian and Philippe Haladjian with guest speaker, Jema Taboyan. The second session was held from August 1 - August 29, with 100 families enjoying the



Group picture of camp children in Bulgaria with their leaders.
Camp Arev Juniors' group picture.

fellowship and beauty of the area. Samuel Keheyian acted as Director for the session with Rev. Jean Agopian, serving as guest speaker.

Vercor - More than 30 teenagers, ages 15-17 spent two weeks at camp with Rev. Krikor Khayiguian as guest speaker. Rev. George Dabbo was the camp director.

CALIFORNIA

The Edward J. Manishagian Armenian Evangelical Conference Center of Frazier Park has been the home for Camp Arev for

the past decade. Under the direction of Mrs. Cindy Kaloostian, Executive Director, the camp provides year-round programming for the Armenian Evangelical Churches of California.

During a period of three consecutive weeks from July 27 - August 16, 1997, three camps were provided for juniors, junior high and high school students.

Junior camp - July 27 - August 2, 1997. Sixty people attended camp during this week for campers grades 4 and 5. The speakers were veteran Sunday School teachers, Jim and Joyce Burns from the United Armenian Congregational Church of Hollywood, CA, who spoke on the subject of spiritual discipline. Music for the week was led by Arman Karlozian and veteran Camp Arev music teacher, Guy Chookoorian.

Junior high camp - August 3-9, 1997. Total attendance for the week was 95 for campers grades 6 - 8. The speaker for the week was Jonelle Garo a recent Princeton graduate and newly-appointed youth director at the First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno, CA. Music was provided by Peter Dishchekian of Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church of Downey, CA.

High school camp - August 10-16. The more than 100 attendees at this camp for grades 9-12 required the use of additional housing facilities, including sleeping tents, portable toilets and showers. Pastor Bill Baldwin from Redeeming Grace Presbyterian Church of Laguna Hills, CA, was the guest speaker with Daniel Gertmenian of Cilicia Armenian Evangelical Church in charge of the music programs.

The camps provided an opportunity for the children and youth to leave behind their everyday activities and enjoy the fellowship of like-minded youth in a beautiful mountain setting. Aside from the regular camp activities, under the direction of Camp Dean Hrag Saboundjian and Facility Director Freddie Castillo, the campers made improvements to the grounds by renovating the fire-circle benches and installing new decking. □

AMAA BOOK SERVICE PROGRAM

OLD & NEW TESTAMENTS

Old & New Test. (genuine leather) - black or white, No. 14f \$20.00
Old & New Test. (large print), No. 13h \$15.00
Children's Bible, No. 15a \$7.50
Serpazan Badmutiun (for children), No. 155b \$10.00
Old & New Test. (Extra large print), No. 13k \$20.00

TAPES & VIDEOS

ARMENIAN NEW TESTAMENT ON TAPES - No. 195 \$15.00
ARMENIAN SACRED MUSIC CHORALE (4 tapes), Sharagans, Arm. Hymns & Sacred Anthems conducted by Dr. John Merjianian. No. 203 \$25.00
NOR YERK YERKETSEK DEROTCH, #1, (tape) No. 208b \$10.00
NOR YERK YERKETSEK DEROTCH, #2, (tape) No. 208c \$10.00
ARMENIAN FOLK SONGS (CD), Mannik Grigorian - Gevork Dabaghian Trio - No. 202 \$15.00
KOMITAS, Armenian music for Piano (Tape), No. 205c \$10.00
KOMITAS, Armenian music for Piano (CD), No. 205 \$15.00
KOMITAS-ASLAMAZIAN, Chilingirian Quartet (CD) No. 210 \$15.00
KOMITAS-ASLAMAZIAN, Sacred Music Chorale, conducted by "SERPAZAN YERKER" (tape), No. 193 \$10.00
YEREVAN WOMEN'S CHOIR OF ARMENIA (Tape), No. 207 \$10.00

Legend: hc=hard cover; pb=paperback

ARMENIA AT THE CROSSROADS, Edited by Gerald J. Libaridian, 170 pp. pb, No. 222 \$14.95
BLACK DOG OF FATE, by Peter Balakian, The author reveals his awakening to his Armenian past and tells a probing story about the far-reaching consequences of the Genocide, 289 pp, hc, No. 268 \$24.00
A BRIEF HISTORY OF ARMENIA, by Rev. Sarkis Papajian, pb. No. 140 \$5.00
CLAWS OF THE CRAB: Georgia & Armenia in Crisis, by Stephen Brook, 354 pp, hc, No. 237 \$25.00
FAITH, CHURCH, MISSION, by Vigen Guroian, 176 pp, pb, No. 244 \$14.95
THE FORTY DAYS OF MUSA DAGH, by Frantz Werfel, The heroic struggle of a small group of courageous Armenian men, women and children defending themselves against the Ottoman Turkish onslaught, 824 pp. pb. No. 119 \$9.95
A HISTORY OF THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE, Volume I, by George A. Bournoutian, 174 pp, pb, No. 245 \$17.00
MUSA DAGH: Escape to Musa Dagh or the Banishment of Zeitoun and Suedia's Revolt, by Rev. D. Antreassian 74 pp., pb, No. 234 \$7.00
RISE THE EUPHRATES, by Carol Edgarian, 370 pp., hc. No. 242 \$22.00

IDEAS FOR GIFTS

ARMENIA: PORTRAITS OF SURVIVAL, an Exhibit of photographs by Don Miller, pb, No. 240 \$12.00
ARMENIAN NEEDLELACE & EMBROIDERY, by Alice Odian Kasparian, hc, No. 120 \$15.00
GALLERY NOAH'S ARK, (Album - paintings of young Armenian Artists) Henrik Iguitian, 128 pp, hc, No. 260 \$35.00
L'AUTOMNE D'OR, (Picture-book on Armenia), by Patrick Mesner, 80 pictures, pb, No. 254 \$10.00
MAP - REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA, No. 253 \$15.00
SET OF SEVEN STAMPS, issued by the Republic of Armenia, commemorating the 1700th anniversary of Christianity in Armenia. The cost for the set is \$12.00 plus \$2.00 for shipping and handling. No. 250
HAND CRAFTED TRIVETS of solid wood, composed of 12 interlocking squares - ՔԱՐԻ ԵԿԱԲ - "Paree Yegak" trivet (Armenian), No. 26a \$5.00
TREE OF LIFE, (Album - Children's Art Museum of Armenia) Henrik Iguitian, 128 pp, hc, No. 261 \$35.00

COOKBOOKS

THE COMPLETE ARMENIAN COOKBOOK, by Alice Bezjian, 280 pp, hc, colorfull pictures, No. 122 \$30.00
PLEASE PASS THE PILAF, (Cookbook), by Elizabeth Tootelian, 98 pp., pb. No. 235 \$10.00

BOOK ORDER FORM

Fill, clip and mail to:
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140 Forest Ave., Paramus, NJ 07652
Tel. (201) 265-2607, Fax: (201) 265-6015

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Make Checks payable to: Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc. (Canada: Payable in U.S. dollars).
Prices subject to change.

Armenian Missionary Association of America Child Care Committee Sponsors "Children Helping Children"

Over two hundred friends attended a festive luncheon at the Beverly Hills, CA, Sofitel Hotel.

Parents, family and friends of 18 beautiful children applauded as each youngster walked the runway in fashions by The Adorable Shop of Alhambra. Everyone was charmed as narrator Linda Kay Abdulian described the outfits and "interviewed" each young participant.

Authentic Armenian costumes brought especially for the event from Armenia adorned young models, Sarah and Lisa Kalemkarian, Anush Cabraloff and Talar Bilemjan. Other young mannequins included, Alexis Abdulian; Jake Geragos; Nicole Felikian; Madeline Karabian; Melinea Karapetian; Lori Karkadorian; Tali Missirlian; Ashley, Christina and Taylor Phillips; Emily Smith; Talene Shirikian; Jacqueline Tchapanian and Max Zeronian.

Tables were decorated with baskets filled with favors including nail polish bearing the logo, "Children Helping Children". Hundreds of balloons created a child's fantasy. An exciting silent auction of 32 items

drew many bidders. Among the prizes were a pave diamond heart necklace, nabe pearl ring and appealing baskets for a child's Christmas.

Christina Tchapanian chaired the event with her high energy committee's Linda Kay Abdulian, Elizabeth Agbabian, Diane Cabraloff, Hermine Janoyan, Sandra Kalemkarian, Mary Kassabian, Grace Kay, Grace Kurkjian, Dina Phillips, Michelle Shirikian, Joyce Stein, Savey Tufenkian and Laura Zeronian.

The financial results of this wonderful event will provide a Christmas party in Armenia for 10,000 children. "Children Helping Children" - what a better way to say to our Armenian youngsters, we love

and care.

The luncheon was generously sponsored by Joyce Stein, the Co-Chair of the Orphan Care Committee, and Mrs. Charles Akaboff. The proceeds were \$25,000. □



Members of the Luncheon Committee (left to right) Hermine Janoyan, Laura Zeronian, Mary Kassabian, Lucy Tufenkian, Christina Tchapanian, Linda Kay Abdulian, Grace Kurkjian, Elizabeth Agbabian.

LETTER FROM A PRISONER

The Armenian population of California has grown substantially in recent years, largely due to immigrants from Armenia or other parts of the former Soviet Union. Unfortunately, some of the immigrants - primarily young men - have abused their new-found freedom and have engaged in illegal activities. Many of them wind up in jail.

In response to a request from a young man in a California jail, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) sent him a copy of the Bible and other religious literature in the Armenian language.

The AMAA recently received a letter from this young man which may be of interest to many Armenians. It was accompanied by a drawing of a pair of hands folded in prayer. The text of the letter is as follows:

"Dear Rev. Janbazian,

I am writing this letter to inform you that I received your package today which I am very thankful of. I also want to thank God for answering my prayers. The Armenian Bible was the biggest surprise. I thank you so much. I've always wanted the Bible, but I never thought I could receive it through mail. I cannot wait to start reading it tonight. Even though I do have the English version, I do speak and write also read Armenian fluently. The reason my letters are in English is to make sure they get delivered faster, since the prison reads all the outgoing mail and it takes longer if they have to translate the Armenian.

I am doing just fine, (specially now that I have what I wished and prayed for). I also want to thank the Association for the services that were rendered.

I don't think I will be in here for too long, but for whatever time that I have, I would be honored and more than happy to correspond your letters. Or if you have questions. I think I have enough reading material for now, but that won't be a reason for us not to communicate. So please do write me if I can be of some kind of help to the Association. I thank you again. Also, I sent a drawing that I drew a week ago that was on my wall that I would like you to have. (Do not worry, I will draw another one for myself)."

News & Notes

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF CALIFORNIA'S OLDEST ARMENIAN CHURCH

by Gene & Jan Franklin

The weekend of Sept. 6-7 was filled with warm memories of a church's heritage as members and guests of the First Armenian Presbyterian Church (FAPC) of Fresno turned out for their "Celebration of a Century," - 100 years of ministry in Fresno and 100 years of the existence of the church.

The banquet was sold out with a total attendance of about 1,000.

FAPC is California's oldest Armenian church, founded by forty Armenian immigrants on July 25, 1897. It has grown to more than 450 members.

Throughout its 100 years of ministry, the FAPC has made a special point of helping immigrants as well as native Californians.

The church's first pastor was Rev. Dr. Lysander Tower Burbank, a native of New England and a missionary to Bitlis, Turkey, for ten years.

The celebration started at Centre Plaza Holiday Inn with Dr. Raymond V. Damadian as the keynote speaker.

During the centennial celebration, Patricia G. Brown, General Assembly Moderator of the Presbyterian Church (USA), also extended the greetings and congratulations

of the Presbyterian Church.

The Fresno Youth Symphony String Quartet performed a number of instrumental pieces before and during the banquet dinner.

Included in the group were two fourth generation church members, Pamela and Stefanie Vartabedian.

Fresno's Earl Meyers also performed.

Dr. Alan Rea accompanied Meyers on the piano.

While many distinguished people came to commemorate the historic moment, one man, William Saroyan, has helped to stamp First Armenian Presbyterian Church into history forever.

Saroyan grew up attending the church and has left many memories of it in his writings.

In "My Favorite Town - Fresno, California," Saroyan said, "Only at church



(left to right) Dr. & Mrs. Raymond Damadian with Rev. Bernard Guekguezian during the Centennial Banquet.

(referring to First Armenian) did he (mankind) seem to come near grace and meaning, especially when he opened the hymn book and his mouth in earnest song. I sang, too. I still do. The Protestant songs are thus forever a part of my own search for meaning."

Though the centennial celebration will come to an end, with continued leadership from members and the senior pastor, Rev. Bernard Guekguezian, the ministry of First Armenian Presbyterian Church will continue to bless many lives in Fresno into the next century.

ORDINATION SERVICE OF REV. HAROUT SELIMIAN

On September 28, 1997, at 6:00 p.m. the Worship Service of Ordination for Harout Selimian took place at the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church of Aleppo, Syria.

The Worship Service of Ordination was led by Rev. Avedis Boynerian, pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Martyr's Church of Aleppo and Chairman of the Central Committee of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE). Other participants in the service included Rev. Beshara Moussa Oghli, Rev. Youssef Ousda Jabbour and Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian.

Rev. Hovhannes Karjian, President of UAECNE, conducted the ordination ceremony. Rev. Dr. John Khanjian, President of Haigazian University, extended his right hand of fellowship and congratulated Rev. Harout Selimian and welcomed him into the Armenian

Evangelical Church family as a fellow minister. After the charging of the newly ordained and the congregation by Revs. Karjian and Boynerian respectively, the congregation sang a hymn of praise, followed by Rev. Selimian's Benediction which concluded the Worship Service.

Rev. Selimian is a graduate of the Near East School of Theology and continued his education receiving a Masters of Divinity in Missiology from

McCormick Theological Seminary of Chicago, IL. He is currently pursuing his STM degree from NEST.



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DR. VAHE MISSAK CHURUKIAN

Dr. Vahe Missak Churukian was born in Kessab, Syria, on June 29, 1906, to Missak and Mariam Churukian. He was raised and nurtured in a loving Christian home with his two sisters, Martha and Ephronia and his three brothers, Arpiar, Giragos and Vahan.



Dr. Churukian graduated with honors from the American University of Beirut in 1934 and started his medical practice in Jsr-el-Shoukhour, Syria. In 1936 he married his beloved Emelia, who became his lifetime faithful partner. Dr. Churukian zealously devoted himself to the well-being of his Syrian townspeople for 18 years, treating generously and without discrimination towards the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated. Upon his departure to the United States of America in 1953, the entire town of Jsr-el-Shoukhour grieved their loss of an excellent physician, trusted friend and wise counselor.

Searching for a better future for his family of four daughters, Thelma, Lily, Rita and Alice, and one son, Michael Missak, Dr. Churukian settled in Los Angeles taking up residence in Los Feliz and initially working on Washington Blvd., later moving to the Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center where he became very active in the community. He was a deacon at Masis Church where he initiated the introduction of the Armenian sermon and served in various capacities at the United Armenian Congregational Church. He was a founding member of the Armenian Professional Society and Hamazkayin Cultural Foundation of Los Angeles.

At the Medical Center he was founder and President of the Ministers/Doctors Club and at the Los Feliz Breakfast Club he initiated the tradition of the Armenian Culture Awareness day. Besides being an effective leader in the community-at-large, he was respected by his colleagues as an excellent diagnostician. Many are the stories attesting to this fact. As for his patients in America, they loved him for the same reasons as did the ones in Syria. They were grateful to be in the hands of an excellent physician who was also a truly good man, sincerely interested not only in their physical well-being, but also in their emotional and spiritual health.

His many acts of philanthropy included founding a school in Jsr-el-Shoukhour for the Armenian families, setting up a scholarship endowment with the Armenian Missionary

Association and donating to the Ararat Retirement Facility in Los Angeles. Dr. Churukian retired at the age of 75. He resided the last two years at the Ararat Nursing Facility where he was surrounded by former patients and family.

On October 31, 1997, at 2 o'clock in the morning, God welcomed him, surely, with the following words, "well done good and faithful servant".

He is survived by his five children, Mrs. Thelma Kevorkian, Mrs. Lily Johnson, Mrs. Rita Tilkian, Judge Alice Altoon and Dr. Michael Churukian, 16 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

FRED MICKAELIAN

Eulogy by Dr. Joseph Zeronian

Fred Mickaelian was born November 10, 1905, to Hyrabad and Hatoonig Mickaelian in the village of Jerah, Turkey, 20 miles outside the city of Bursa and across the Sea of Marmara from the capital city of Constantinople.



At the age of two, he came to America with his parents through Ellis Island, continuing on to Corpus Christi, Texas, where he had many relatives. After a few years the family moved to Calway, a small community south of Fresno, California, where his father began farming. There on Chestnut Avenue, the family grew with the birth of brothers John, George and Mike. Their grandmother lived across the way and uncle Hagopian down the road a ways. They were a close family, all living nearby in the traditional way, and they had many good times together. They were members of the First Armenian Presbyterian Church in Fresno, and attended every Sunday.

They all helped with the work on the farm - an interest they held all of their lives. The Mickaelians acquired the first tractor in the area and Fred, while yet a teenager, hired out to surrounding farms, discing the vineyards and other fields. In his whole life, he was not afraid of hard work. Fred received his public education in Calway, as well as attending a business college in Fresno.

In 1924, the Mickaelian family moved again; this time to Southern California, settling in Culver City. Fred soon joined the Gethsemane Armenian Congregational Church where he sang in the choir and met his future wife, Akabe Alice Nahigian. In 1931, they married at the Nahigian family home on Diamond Avenue in South Pasadena. Theirs

has been a full, active, happy and productive life for 65 years. They were blessed with two sons, Fred Jr. and Harold Lee. God took Harold Lee after a short time on earth.

Throughout those depression years, Fred worked for Ralph's Grocery Stores in Los Angeles and later in Pasadena where he was in charge of the fruit and vegetable departments. With the outbreak of World War II, Fred went into defense work.

As the war was ending, he and his brothers began vegetable farming on approximately 200 acres of land along Crenshaw Blvd. between El Segundo and Rosecrans Blvd. in what is today the City of Gardena, south of the Hawthorne Airport. For several years they grew celery, asparagus, lettuce and other vegetables. You won't find the farm today - housing tracts covered it all in the 1950's.

What many of us remember about that farm was that it had a good-sized reservoir, covering about an acre and stocked with bass and blue gill. He and his brothers often fished there during their lunch break. Many of us young people from the church often fished on the farm. So, too, did local policemen and firemen. Perhaps that explains why the Mickaelians were never ticketed when their produce trucks left the fields tracking mud into the surrounding streets for miles around.

After the lease on the farm land ended, Fred again worked as a grocer for several years. An opportunity opened at Oneonta Elementary School a few blocks from home, and he began a new career as the school's head custodian. For those who may not know schools as I do, let me tell you that the head custodian and the school secretary are the ones who really run an elementary school. The children and staff loved him; in his retirement he saw many of them as they grew up in the community, and he is remembered by them to this day.

During all these years, Fred was active at the Gethsemane and later the United Armenian Congregational Church, the Knights of Vartan, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Masons and the Eastern Star. But there was always plenty of time for his family - the Mickaelian family reunions, birthday parties, summer vacations on Balboa Island when the children were young and entertaining family and friends at home. Somewhere along the way he became Uncle Fred - not only to family but to good friends.

At Gethsemane, he was Treasurer for 10 years, and also served on the Board of Deacons and Board of Trustees. He was also a Deacon at UACC.

Uncle Fred was an active member in the South Pasadena Masonic Lodge since 1964, holding many key offices. In October 1983

he received the Hiram Award, the highest honor bestowed on a member of the Free and Accepted Masons. It is always awarded to the member who unselfishly gives of his time, talents and energy for the betterment of others. That is an apt description of Uncle Fred's life.

Fishing and camping were among his great loves. He loved the mountains, hiking along streams as he fished. Annually he would spend a week of fishing at Dinky Creek, northwest of Fresno, with his brothers and a group of old friends whose friendship began in his youth. Uncle Fred was a serious camper. One year he took us fishing to Kings Canyon National Park on a long weekend. We, of course, slept in his large 10 by 15 tent. No matter how long it took to put up or how much room in the trunk it took - Uncle Fred's tent was a necessary part of camping!

He retired in 1970 at the age of 65 and enjoyed many years of leisure. He loved to drive to his second home in Lake Arrowhead where mountains, lake and trees gave him so much pleasure. He spent many hours tending his garden and cultivating his dozens of orchid plants.

We can rejoice in his long full life and the happiness he gave to so many. Uncle Fred is survived by his wife, Akabe; son, Fred, Jr.; daughter-in-law, Marilyn; granddaughter, Jennifer; brother, George; sister-in-law, Mary; many nieces and nephews and many, many friends.

SATINEG PARSEKIAN

Satineg Parsekian was born in Ashland, Massachusetts, in 1908, the daughter of Oscar and Julia Ansbikian (surname changed to David) and was one of four children. She had one sister, Beulah Sarkisian, and two brothers, Aram and Berj David.

In 1925, Satineg graduated from Roxbury Memorial High School, after which she worked in her father's Roxbury grocery store, the "Dudley Square Market" until 1930. Then she worked for "Park and Pollard" until her mid-thirties when she returned to her father's grocery store.

Satineg, always a faithful member of the First Armenian Church from the time of its Porter Square location, served from 1930 to 1940 as one of our Church School teachers.

In 1951, Satineg married Sampson T. Parsekian, and from 1950 to 1985, they lived in New Jersey where Satineg worked for the AMAA as a secretary, first in New York and then later, in Paramus, New Jersey.

After Satineg's husband died in 1975, Satineg continued to live in their North Bergen, New Jersey home for another ten years, after which she moved to Arlington in 1985 where she lived with her sister Beulah Sarkisian.

During this time, her brother Aram died in 1987, and Beulah followed in 1991.

Because Satineg and Sampson had no children of their own, she was very close to her nieces and nephews to whom she was a fine example of Christian principles. Satineg lived her faith, read her Bible, prayed, always showed courage, and never spoke evil of anyone.

Throughout her adult years, she was a generous and faithful supporter of First Armenian Church, the AMAA, and other charities. On Monday, October 20, 1997 Satineg returned to the Lord.

ROSE GRACE HARABEDIAN

Rose Grace Kandarian was born in Los Angeles, California on August 14, 1914, to George (Krikor) Kandarian and Stella (Asdghig) Soukesian. She had an older brother, Edward, and two younger sisters, Zabelle and Dora.



In their earlier years, the Kandarian family did a great deal of traveling throughout California. Shortly after Rose was born the family moved to Fowler to run a farm where both Zabelle and Dora were born. In 1923 the bank foreclosed on George's farm and the family was fortunately offered another job on a farm in Clovis. Shortly thereafter, the owner decided to sell this farm and the family was forced to move to another farm in Clovis working for Mr. Hagopian. One year later, Mr. Hagopian decided he wanted George and his family to tend to his other farm in Modesto in 1926. In 1928, the family again packed up and moved to Manteca where George was offered a job at a dry cleaning shop.

Eventually, George got tired of the dry cleaning business. Meanwhile, Kegham Soukesian, Stella's brother, wrote to the family encouraging them to move back to L.A. The family left Manteca for Los Angeles in 1929. After George and the family settled in L.A., he started up a window washing service which he worked at until he retired in 1945. Around the same time, August 25, 1945, Rose was married to Andrew Harabedian.

Andy was in the Navy and he and Rose moved to Dallas where he was stationed. About the time the war was ending, Andy was discharged from the service and he and Rose moved back to L.A. They couldn't find a place to rent so they ended up staying with Rose's parents at their house on 48th and Broadway. There they had two sons, Steve and Rob. After three years of looking, Andy

and Rose found a house in Van Nuys in 1949. Sometime later their third son, Jeff, was born. Rose had been moving her entire life and it was time for her and her husband to stay in one place for a while. Rose lived at this location until she passed away and came into the Lord's presence on July 30, 1997.

She leaves behind her husband, Andy, her three sons Steve, Rob, and his wife Paula; Jeff, and his wife Denise; her grandchildren, Morgan, Alex, Mark, Peter, Joseph, and Elyse; sisters Zabelle, and her husband Bill; Dora; sisters-in-law Dorothy and Maxine; and 28 nephews and nieces.

The AMAA Board of Directors extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased through the medium of the AMAA News.

- * **Keosheyian, Mary** Hollywood, CA May 17, 1997
- * **Boodakian, Elizabeth** Fresno, CA June 16, 1997
- * **Manoukian, Zabelle** Milford, OH June 25, 1997
- * **Harabedian, Rose** Van Nuys, CA July 30, 1997
- * **Arakelian, Mary** Medford, MA Aug. 2, 1997
- * **Chavoor, Frank** Burbank, CA Sept. 23, 1997
- * **Atmajian, Lydia** Wallingford, PA Oct. 7, 1997
- * **Ouyoumjian, Emelia** Granada Hills, CA Oct. 13, 1997
- * **Ouyoumjian, Krikor** Granada Hills, CA Oct. 28, 1997
- * **Kashishian, Mary** Fresno, CA
- * **Sobajian, Robert** Fresno, CA
- * **Aivazian, Spence, Hasmig** Southbury, CT
- * **Magarian Aznive** Fresno, CA
- * **Tavookjian, Charles** Fresno, CA
- * **Tamakian, James** Southfield, MI
- * **Bohigian, Jerry** Fresno, CA
- * **Kassab, Fred** Long Island, NY
- * **Baloyan, Michael** Cranston, RI
- * **Murphy, Maryann**
- * **Zanazanian, Sirvart**

* Memorials designated for AMAA.
**Bequest Assigned

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1. **discovering the right amount** to give, so that your gift expresses your commitment and stewardship, but does not impair you and your family's well-being,
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For example, several planned giving alternatives are available by which donated securities (or other assets) can provide life income for the donor and/or loved ones, and thereby realize some tax advantages without sacrificing needed income.

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